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THE CHURCH
AND THE CHURCHES.

REV. THOS. SPENCER.

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The Church

and the Churches:

A COURSE OF EPIPHANY SERMONS.

BY THE

REV. THOMAS SPENCER,

Rector of St. John's Church, Petersburg, Va.

RICHMOND, VA.:
BECKWITH & PARHAM, PUBLISHERS.
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PREFATORY NOTE.

It is with some misgivings that I send forth this little book. It was no part of my original purpose to print these sermons; they were intended simply for my own little congregation. Friends who thought better of them than I do, persuaded me to print them. Perhaps I yielded too readily to their persuasions. But, wherever they ought to be, here they are. If they shall do any good, I shall be profoundly thankful. I hardly think they can do any harm. If they shall be deemed neither good nor bad, but indifferent, I must seek consolation in the fact that the issuing of indifferent books is not an offence unheard of or unforgiven. I hope I shall not be driven to seek that consolation.

There is, evidently, no attempt at completeness made herein. Except in the case of the Church of England—a topic of special interest to Episcopalians—I have treated only of the Churches represented in our city.

T. S.

PETERSBURG, VA.,
March 12, 1884.

No. I.

THE CHURCH AND THE CHURCHES.

Philippians 1. 15-18.

"Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the Gospel. What then? Nothwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."

THE great topic of the Epiphany season is that of the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of Men. During His life on earth that manifestation was made in wonderful, miraculous manner. A strange star guided wise men from the East to the manger bed at Bethlehem, there to find and worship the King of kings. A glorious transfiguration gave assurance of His Divine dignity to the inner circle of His Apostles. In all His ministry, from Cana to Bethany,

were constantly recurring miracles which proclaimed Him Son of God. These miracles, with their revelation of His Divine glory and deep human sympathy, are favourite topics in the Epiphany season.

It cannot, I think, be foreign to the spirit of this season, that we should ask ourselves the question: After what manner has Christ been manifested to men during the more than eighteen centuries that have gone by since His ascension into heaven? The answer is, of course: Not now by such miracles as were wrought during His life on earth, for these seem to have ceased with the Apostolic age, but through the agencies operated by His holy Church. The Church of Christ, then, and her manifestations of her Lord and Saviour, will furnish us with topics eminently befitting this season of the Christian year.

And what and where is the Church of Christ? Laying aside all controversy as to the true notes of the Church, I use the term in that wide, charitable sense in which our Prayer Book uses it when it defines the "Holy Church Universal" as "all who profess and call themselves Christians." And, without determining anything as to the rival claims of different Christian bodies, I shall

imitate the charity and courtesy of the Preface to our Prayer Book in speaking of their organizations as "churches." I do not thereby affirm anything as to the lawfulness of their government, or the general correctness of their doctrines; but use toward them the same courtesy which I would fain find them use when they speak of my own church.

When we speak of the Church of Christ, there comes before us the vision of many bodies bearing diverse names, and holding different positions on many matters of doctrine and discipline. Each claims to hold and teach God's truth more perfectly than the rest. Some of them seem to contend far more earnestly with the others than against the common foe. To most of us these divisions of Christendom are a matter of regret and lamentation. We long for a closer union between the severed portions of Christ's Church. We see our forces wasted in the perpetuation of these divisions. We fear the Spirit of Christ is often grieved by the bitterness of our controversies.

Let us for a brief space turn back and view the primitive condition of Christ's Church, then let us ask about the origin of these divisions, and their results.

1. *The Primitive Church.*—A very beautiful picture is that of the Church which is presented us in the early chapters of the Book of Acts. Brave men took their lives in their hands on the day of Pentecost, and proclaimed the crucified and risen Jesus to be the Son of God and Saviour of Men. Their proclamation was blessed. Multitudes repented and believed, and were admitted by baptism into the Christian fellowship. It was the fellowship of a loving family, in which rich and poor were on terms of equal brotherhood. The love which bound them to the Saviour bound them also to each other. They had all things common. The peace of God was with them, and cheered them in their trials. The love of Christ was shed abroad in their hearts, and inspired them to deeds of love.

But we have not to go outside of the Apostolic age to find the beginning of discord in the Church. A Judaizing party tried to narrow the catholic spirit of the Gospel. There were Gentile Christians who were trying to accommodate the Gospel to their outworn philosophies. Pharisaism and Sadduceeism were reproducing themselves in the Christian Church, as under various names they have been doing ever since. But though

there were rival parties in the Apostolic age, the New Testament gives us no hint of rival organizations.

For a long time after the Apostolic age, the Church of Christ remained one in doctrine and discipline. The spirit of error, indeed, never ceased to make assaults upon her faith. Here and there arose heretics and evildoers, as in St. Paul's time, who were excluded from the Christian fellowship. By and by these gathered around them followers, and under the names of Montanists, Gnostics, or Manicheans, formed organizations separate from the Church, holding faiths which were strangely compounded of Christian and heathen elements. But all these organizations have long since passed out of existence. The grave has prevailed against them. Early in the fourth century a controversy, respecting the Divinity of Christ, rent the Church in twain, and later sprang up the schisms of the Novatians and Donatists. But time healed these diversities. Again almost all professing Christians became of one communion and fellowship. It was not until the year 1054, that the first of the greater divisions of Christendom was finally consummated, when the Eastern and Western Churches solemnly excommunicated

each other; and not until the sixteenth century that the Roman Church and the various bodies called Protestant were separated from each other.

2. The question, *What was the origin of these divisions* which we now observe in the Church? is not easy to answer briefly. Some of them have had their beginning in the disturbing forces of human pride; forces which our Lord saw working even in the breasts of His Apostles, when He rebuked their contention as to which should be the greatest in His kingdom by setting a little child in the midst of them. Beneath the other alleged causes for the separation of the Eastern and Western Churches, was the rivalry of the Bishops of Rome and Constantinople for the position of highest power and honour in the Church. And of such rivalries have sprung, no doubt, many of the divisions of these modern times.

Again, some of these divisions have come about through the pressure of circumstances which the separatists could not at the time control. So it was with the Churches of the Reformation, when they unwillingly lost their Episcopal government, before they contented themselves with that which they now retain. So it was with the Methodists of

the last century, when they vainly strove to remain in the communion of the Church of England, and with their fiery zeal to arouse her out of the stupour into which she had fallen. The blame of that separation rested not upon the Methodists who went out so unwillingly, but upon the foolish Churchmen who drave them out.

And chief among the reasons of these divisions is that of honest differences of religious convictions. Such differences are not confined to the sphere of religious things. We have different schools of thought in philosophy, science, and medicine, as well as in theology. We cannot read far in the literature of any art or science, without meeting with the clash of conflicting theories respecting the very first principles of that art or science. It is strange, no doubt, that men view the same things so differently; but strange or simple, the fact that they do thus differ, and that they do so intelligently and honestly, is beyond dispute. And the world goes on, and these arts and sciences make progress, in spite of such differences, if not by means of them.

Now we Christians hold the supremacy of conscience. What a man conscientiously believes to be his duty, that we hold him

bound to do. His conscience may be imperfectly informed; yet, still it binds. He ought to seek all the light that he can get; but he must act upon the light he has. We may pity a misguided conscience, but the man who unswervingly follows it deserves our respect. And, because I believe that so many of those who differ from me in religious faith do so at the bidding of their conscience, I cannot bring myself to think or speak of them in the terms of harsh denunciation which some are fond of using. Even if they are in error, God may see far more to approve in their honest cleaving to that error, than in another man's less earnest profession of the truth. And when the word of blame would rise to my lips, I find its utterance checked by the remembrance of St. Paul's words: "Who art thou that judgest another? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand."

3. What, then, are *the results of these divisions?* Most of us think first of evil results. If we had our way we would have all Christians to make the same profession of faith; to worship in the same manner; to be united in the same organization, under the same government. It will come to that by

and by, we feel sure, when Christ's people shall be gathered together in the New Jerusalem. And we long to anticipate the heavenly blessing of that perfect union.

Well, no doubt, there are many evil results growing out of our divisions. They minister oftentimes to strifes and jealousies. They cause us sometimes to hold God's truth disproportionately; to set a higher importance on the lesser matters in which we differ from each other, than upon the greater matters in which we are at one. They involve a great waste of means and energy. Much strength is spent in contests with each other that would be far more profitably spent in striving against the enemies of the Gospel. Men outside the Church, viewing our unhappy divisions, distrust us when we profess to bear to them God's truth; tell us that first we should agree among ourselves, and then we may hope to bring conviction to others.

Yes, we see enough of harm growing out of these divisions, to make us long for closer unity; as when in poverty we long for some measure of riches, as when in sickness we long for health, as when in time of mortal danger we long for life.

But we are believers in the overruling

providence of God. As such we recognize that poverty and sickness, pain and sorrow, and even death, may have a mission of good to us. When these things come upon us, not through our own choice or fault, we comfort ourselves with the thought that they come by His permission, and trust that He will make them work out what is best for us. Have we ground for this trust in our own case; and no ground for it when we consider the troubles that have befallen His Church? Nay! Rather, I think, is it the part of Christian believers to trust that even in those things which we deplore, and against which we strive, an All-wise Providence is bringing good to His Church. To my own mind, it would seem like making shipwreck of my faith in God's providence, to believe that our divisions were the unmitigated evils which some people represent them to be. Evil fruits, no doubt, they do bear, but some good there must be off-setting this evil, or surely, God would not have permitted them.

We may not see all this good now. It may need the revelation of the Great Day to make it known to us. But a part of it we may perhaps see even now. Doubtless these divisions, which minister so often to strifes

and jealousies, excite honest zeal no less than envious ambition. We provoke one another unto good works, and are, perchance, more fruitful than we should be were there no rival Christian organizations by our side. And when we note how often our divisions follow the lines of difference in human temperament, we cannot but hope that the Gospel of Christ, presented in such varied manner, finds a wider acceptance among men than it would otherwise.

And if this hope be true, we may rejoice in view of it, without abating aught from the sincerity of our own convictions. In so far as Christ is preached, let us rejoice, whether those who preach Him regard us with envy and strife, or with good will. And if men blame us for our rejoicing we will fall back upon the example of the greatest of Apostles, who, though he held unswervingly his own convictions, and did not hesitate to denounce the errors of his opponents, yet could distinguish between the good and the evil of their work, and could thank God for the good, wherever he found it.

And of this I feel certain: that if the reunion of Christendom is ever to be brought about, it will not be by magnifying our differences, and denouncing one another. Men

are not much drawn to seek the fellowship of those who denounce them. It is a poor way to draw people together to be always telling them how widely they are apart. Let us tell more of each other's good things than of each other's evil. Let us dwell more upon the things in which we agree, than upon those in which we differ. Just in the proportion in which we see that we hold the same foundation truths, the same hopes, and the same aims, will be our desire that the barriers which separate us may be broken down. And whether these barriers be broken down or not, our work will not suffer, nor will we be any the worse, for a little more of the leaven of Christian charity.

It is in the interest of this Christian charity, and not of controversial strife, that I propose, in this course of sermons, to speak of some of the Churches around us. I do not purpose to magnify our differences, and to pick out faults. It is not that I think these are of no importance, but that, even in cases where prejudice has well-nigh blinded us to all but faults, our agreements are more and greater. Too much have we been disposed to blame each other; we can well afford to speak for each other a word of praise.

And lest some should confound with laxity of conviction the spirit of broad Christian charity to which I hope these sermons will give expression, let me say that I remain so firmly attached to the distinctive principles of my own Church, that I could not feel satisfied in any other. I quite well remember that I am occupying a pulpit of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and am willing to be brought to account for any teaching not in harmony with her standards. If some of those who hear me shall come to think that this Church offers the broadest platform on which may stand those men of diverse views who long for Christian reunion, I shall not quarrel with that conviction. If these sermons shall remove from any minds the idea of our exclusiveness, and leave in its place the belief that we are broader in our Christian charity than they had dreamt aforetime, I shall do my Church a truer service than by any denunciation of those who differ from us.

Thankful am I to believe that, with no lack of faithfulness to the Church in which I minister, I shall be able to approve so much in those who are not within her pale; to greet them as brethren, in spite of differences which keep us somewhat apart; to rejoice in

their work, bidding them God-speed; and out of a full heart to give them the Apostolic greeting: "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

No. II.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

Romans i. 7–8.

"To all that be in Rome beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world."

IT is not the fashion among Protestant Christians to speak kindly words about the Roman Church. Perhaps it may be retorted that neither is it the fashion in the Roman Church to speak kindly words about Protestants. The more is the pity if it be so, for if, in very truth, those on both sides of the line which divides us are earnestly striving to serve God, then each, however he may deplore what he regards as the errors of his opponents, may respect the earnestness of those opponents.

How different is it with us in our controversies! Gall and wormwood cannot excel in bitterness the *odium theologicum* which has

entered into many of these controversies. Heat of passion and stubborn prejudice blind us oftentimes alike to our own defects and the excellencies of those who differ from us. The very courts of human law may teach fairness to us who profess to expound Divine law; for they account one innocent until proven guilty, and we oft seem to believe our opponents guilty until proven innocent. In all this we do despite to the spirit of God's grace, wrong to our opponents, and harm to ourselves. And while this charge may, perhaps, be brought against our controversies generally, it applies more especially to those between Protestants and Roman Catholics. There are many well-meaning Protestants who will see no good in Roman Catholicism or its followers. To them the Roman system is one great festering mass of error; Roman worship a lifeless formalism; Roman worshippers devoid of true spiritual religion, and the Roman Pope a proud, grasping, and vengeful tyrant.

Now, I am quite well aware that the points at issue between my Church and that of Rome are many. These issues I believe to be important. Unhesitatingly I espouse the Anglican against the Roman position, in the matters wherein we differ. And yet, fully bear-

ing in mind all these differences, I can use, respecting the Roman Church of these days, the words which St. Paul uses in the text of that Church in its infant days; can greet its members as fellow-Christians, whether they so greet me or not; can earnestly desire for them God's grace and peace, and can sincerely thank God for their wonderful and widespread work.

I. I honour in her communion those who are "beloved of God, called saints."

After all, the training up of such people is the great work of Christ's Church. It is in their holy lives that our Lord sees of the travail of His soul, and is satisfied. And very fruitful has the Roman Church been in the bringing forth of such holy lives. Multitudes of the best of God's saints have been trained in her communion; of those most entirely consecrated in their self-denials, and most spiritual in their worship—their consecration marred by no selfish aims—their spirituality such as no excess of formalism could cramp. They loved Christ with a love that was deep and strong, and the reverence they bore His saints was born of their love for Him; and the prayers they offered to His saints were for intercessions that should

bring them nearer Him. They did not mean to take aught from His glory; they did not mean to put any one on an equality with Him. If they erred, it was an error born of that reverent fear which cannot realize that such poor sinners as we are can approach directly to the Divine Saviour; an error which was their misfortune rather than their sin; and there was more piety in their error than there is in some men's orthodoxy in this matter. The brightness of their holy examples lingers to illuminate us in our heavenward pilgrimage; and most devoutly may we thank God for the inspiration and the help which comes to us from many a holy life lived in the Church of Rome. The spirit of their piety has breathed itself out in hymns so sweet and true that all Christian communions have been glad to make them their own, such as that of St. Francis Xavier which we sang just before this sermon, and that of dear Frederick W. Faber, which we shall sing at its close. Yea, truly, in the Church of Rome to-day are those to whom we feel ourselves drawn as by tender ties of kinship, which we love because of their deep love for our Lord Jesus Christ; of whom we cannot believe otherwise than that they are such as those whom in the olden

days the Apostle greeted as "beloved of God, called to be saints." And we will not take all the grace out of this confession by representing them as "lights shining in a dark place"—as saints in spite of their doctrinal and devotional system, but will as freely confess it to be the aim of that system to produce just such fruits. If oftentimes it fails—oftentimes, alas! we fail also.

II. I honour the Roman Catholic Church for her bright example of missionary activity.

A spirit of missionary activity we find in the Roman Church in the earliest times. Founded we know not by whom, and evidently unvisited by any Apostle up to the time of the writing of this epistle, St. Paul was able to thank God respecting it that its faith had gone out throughout the whole world. The beloved Priscilla and Aquila, who at Corinth and at Ephesus were the Apostle's most faithful fellow-labourers, were before that members of the Christian community that was at Rome. And that missionary spirit has lived, and of its life has largely come the greatness of the Roman Church to-day. When, nearly thirteen hundred years ago, Saxon heathenism had overrun our motherland, England, and the old British

Church, driven back into the mountain fastnesses of Wales, was afraid or unwilling to attempt the conversion of their heathen conquerors, it was a Bishop of Rome who sent out missionaries to win these heathen for Christ. We live in an age in which the missionary spirit has infected almost all bodies of Christians; but before we Protestants had sent forth our men to bear the Gospel among the heathen, the missionaries of the Roman Church had gone forth in great companies, counting no toil too great, and no sufferings too hard to bear, braving death and meeting death in the true spirit of Christian martyrs. All honour to their memory. God forbid that any conviction I may have as to their error should rob me of my profound respect for their Christlike devotion. The successors of these men stand in their places, carrying on their work, making their faith known throughout the whole world, and I thank God for it. Yes, in spite of all the differences in doctrine and discipline which divide us,—breaches so wide that I fear they will never be bridged over till the great day comes,—I thank God that they have gone into the places which we have not reached, and have influenced those on whom we have no hold; and that through their ministries

the Lord Jesus Christ, both theirs and ours, is having in some measure an Epiphany among the Gentiles. May God grant us not only to hold fast our faith in its purity, but to propagate it with their earnest and self-denying zeal.

III. Nor again shall the number and magnitude of our diversities blind me to the truths we hold in common.

It is gratifying to note how, in the midst of the heated conflicts of the Reformation age, our Reformers, in drawing up their Confession of Faith, overstepped the logical order, and placed first among the Thirty-nine Articles those which we hold in agreement with the great Church of Rome. Logically, it comes first in order to define the Rule of Faith, but upon that definition we parted. On the doctrines of the Trinity and the Atonement we were agreed; and, first of all, these were stated. Whatever may have been the human motives which determined this arrangement, doubtless the Holy Spirit brought about the matter; and I shall look upon it as indicating my Church's will that as far as possible we shall be at one with all Christians, putting in the forefront our agreements rather than our differences, even if some-

times we seem thereby to peril logical consistency.

And how vast these agreements are, even with us who are so far divided! The Trinity and the Atonement—why, these are the very head and heart of all Christian theology! And on these truths we clasp hands. We worship the same God; we own the same Master; we trust in the same sacrifice. Nor do our agreements stop here. Alike we await a second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; alike we hope for heaven, alike we seek to avoid hell. We hold and proclaim, essentially, the same moral duties, condemning the same sins, inciting to the same virtues. And who shall blame one if, beholding these agreements, he shall so far overlook the differences as to speak for the other a hearty word of praise? Man may blame, but God is not like man; and He who knows the mind of man with all its infirmities, doubtless makes allowance for all our diversities of judgment as to His truth, and may, for all we know, be working His own will through these diversities. We will trust that He accepts all those whose hearts beat true to Him, and our highest hope shall be that we may be among their number.

IV. And even in respect to these diversities a word of peace and charity may be spoken.

There are some diversities among Christians which might be suffered to die out in silence, as unimportant and unprofitable differences. Other diversities there are in matters of doctrine which could not conscientiously be passed over in silence, but which do not necessitate distinct Church organizations. These differences are held, I think, less bitterly when they are allowed to grow up side by side in the Church, as so-called Calvinists and Arminians dwell together in our own Church in peace; and as Dominicans and Franciscans, holding conflicting opinions, dwelt together in the Church of Rome. It is cause of great regret if, for such differences, we sacrifice the unity of Church organization.

But there are diversities also of a more radical sort, which affect our whole conception of Church organization and authority, which touch also the rule of faith. These are, in their nature, such as compel separation. And of this sort are some of the diversities which sever us from the Church of Rome. What shall we say of these?

Well, while we hold them firmly, we need

not hold them bitterly. And we ought, as in conscience bound, always to state them fairly. The tricks and quibbles which men may excuse at the bar or on the hustings, should have no place in the pulpit, and should find no approval in our hearts. We should put the best construction, rather than the worst, upon the position of those who differ from us. If, sometimes, we may err thereby, we will trust that in the treasury of God's forgiveness there is pardon for errors which are born of charity.

Now, in my Protestantism there is not only a protest against these errors of the Church of Rome, but a vigorous protest also against those who assail them unfairly and uncharitably. Denying, as our Church does, the supremacy and infallibility of the Bishop of Rome, I protest against those representations which make the present supremacy to be the outcome of a tyrannical usurpation, and the asserted infallibility to be a conscious fiction invented in these latter days. The local and temporal position of the Bishop of Rome in the world's great capital, made him greater in influence than other Bishops. He needed not much to grasp at authority; it was thrust upon him, and thrust upon him the more readily because, in the earlier ages of the

Church, he deserved it by using it well. The whole course of history seemingly conspired to bring power into his hands, and laid the foundation for a doctrine of his supremacy. And the Roman doctrine of infallibility is not the absurd claim of the Pope's freedom from all error of judgment which some people understand it to be. Nor is it a new invention, but a doctrine which was in process of growth through centuries. And while the claim of infallibility cannot bear the strict test of historical criticism, history attributes to the Popes of the first ten centuries a record of orthodoxy surpassed by no other line of Bishops.

I protest also against the statement that the Roman Church borrowed from Mohammedanism the doctrine of the immaculate conception, and claim for it a nobler origin in that reverence for the Virgin Mother of our Lord which grew out of love for the Lord Himself. Nay, that and other doctrines of the Roman Church sprang not from the base origin to which some would attribute them. They have roots deep down in our human nature, and in the better part of it; and while I cannot accept them, as bearing no sufficient credentials of Divine origin, I

respect the faith of those who hold them, and leave their case with God.

In spite of our diversities, we may feel thankful that this great body of Christians, outnumbering all our Protestant bodies combined, and furnishing the most perfect example of effective organization, still lives and prospers. We may pray that God may bless them, leading us all more into His light, forgiving our errors, and drawing us more closely together and to Him in the unity of His one great family.

In September of 1881, I stood upon the great lantern tower of York Minster. Beneath me was the noblest of England's grand Cathedrals. On every side stretched out for miles a most beautiful landscape. But something impressed me more that day than the grandeur of the Cathedral or the beauty of the landscape. As I gazed, delighted, on the scene around me, the great bell of the Minster tolled in deep and solemn bass. Every minute through the long hour came again the mournful tolling of the Minster bell. I asked its meaning, and found that the parish priest of St. Wilfred's Roman Catholic Church was dead, and the great Minster bell was tolling for his funeral. Across my mind there flashed the memory

of the bloody reigns of Mary and Elizabeth, when Protestants and Romanists thought no persecutions too cruel to visit upon each other; and I thanked God that we have fallen upon kindlier times, when men are more quick to see each other's good, and more ready to acknowledge it. And as I gazed upon the mingled throng of Protestants and Roman Catholics gathered to honour the memory of that dead priest, and in response to the mournful funeral chant, heard the great bell send down from the lofty Cathedral tower its note of sympathy, I realized more deeply than ever before the essential brotherhood of those Christians who seem to be severed beyond hope of earthly reunion.

"One port, methought, alike they sought,
One purpose hold, where'er they fare;
O bounding breeze, O rushing seas!
At last, at last, unite them there!"

No. III.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

Isaiah 49. 23.

"And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers."

WHEN, in the course of these sermons on the various branches of the Church of Christ, I come to speak of the Church of England, the subject is one which demands our especial regard. From the bosom of the Church of England our own Church drew her mother's milk. From the Church of England we derived our Episcopacy, our Articles of faith, our Liturgy. In faith we depart from her not at all; in worship and government only so far as the differences in civil government necessitate. Your fathers worshipped God over a hundred years ago in the very words of the present English Prayer Book. The walls of old Blandford Church, now silently standing guard over our dead, once echoed with the same words

of praise and prayer that rang through every cathedral of England to-day. Our first Bishop of Virginia, James Madison, received his consecration ninety-three years ago, at the hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Our clergy to-day, when for any purpose they cross the seas, find a hearty welcome to the pulpits of the Church of England. Among the many ties which bind this strong young nation to her old motherland (and God grant these ties may never be fewer or weaker) there is none stronger, and none tenderer, than that furnished in the brotherly intercommunion of our Protestant Episcopal Church and the Church of England.

And, again, even to those who are not now of our own communion, the subject of the Church of England may be one of interest. She is in a way the mother-Church of those bodies of which I am hereafter to speak in this course of sermons. They wandered away from her indeed, as children sometimes do, not liking the old mother's ways; finding fault with her faith, disregarding her counsels, and rejecting her customs; esteeming themselves possessors of a wisdom which had never entered into her dear old head; but it is not well that they should forget what place she filled in the line of their

spiritual ancestors. Before these other vigourous Churches of to-day came to their birth, our forefathers received their spiritual sustenance at her hands. From the time when she took them into her arms as little babes at the baptismal font, until with prayer she laid them tenderly in the grave, she watched over them with a constant care which has earned for her a worthy name among mothers. And for this she deserves to be well thought of by us all.

To the people of this country, whose laws are largely framed upon the laws of England, and whose institutions are modelled upon those of the mother-country, the history and institutions of England furnish a study of great interest. But the oldest and grandest of the English institutions which have remained is that of the English Church. Long before "the flag that's braved a thousand years the battle of the breeze" was first unfurled over a united England, a united Church of Christ in England, under the primacy of the Archbishop of Canterbury, held beneficent sway over the English people. From the Church of England sprang the idea of a kingdom of England. From her synods came the idea of the nation's parliaments, and the canons enacted

in these synods led the way to a national system of laws. So that whatever of historical interest attaches to the nation of England, attaches pre-eminently to the Church of England.

Of the beginnings of her history we cannot speak with definiteness. The introduction of Christianity into England is an event about which we know no more than we do of its introduction into Rome. Whether, as some ancient writers have supposed, the Gospel was first preached by St. Paul himself, or whether Joseph of Arimathea; whether in the movements of the Roman army Christian soldiers were sent to Britain, and brought their faith with them; whether first ordained missionary or converted layman brought to Britain the religion of Christ, we cannot say. And this mist of uncertainty does not overhang alone the origin of the Church of England. But from the mass of conflicting traditions we gather it as certain that the Church of Christ had obtained a firm foothold in Britain before the end of the third century after our Lord's death. There the Divine seed of truth was planted, there it grew, the blood of martyrs watering it in the time of the Diocletian persecution. There Churches sprang up after the Apos-

tolic pattern, with their liturgies, their holy seasons, their threefold ministry. British Bishops were present at the Councils of Arles in A.D. 314, of Sardica in 347, and of Ariminum in 360. So long as Britain remained a part of the Roman Empire, the British Church continued to grow under its favouring protection. But the recall of the Roman troops left the Britons exposed to the attacks of the fierce Picts of Scotland. From these attacks they sought refuge in an alliance with the heathen Saxons. Vain refuge!—for when these Saxons had helped the Britons by driving away the Picts, they helped themselves to the territory of the Britons, driving them back into the mountain region of Wales. Wherever these Saxons went they uprooted the Christian Church; and perhaps it is not strange that the conquered Britons made no effort to proclaim the Gospel to their Saxon conquerors.

In 597 came the Roman missionaries under Augustine, and began their labours in the Saxon kingdom of Kent. With them they brought certain customs of the Roman Church, different from those held by the British Church. About these customs arose contentions, which continued for many years, but finally ended in the reception of the

Roman customs, and the union of the rival branches in the one Church of England. Under Theodore of Tarsus, the seventh Archbishop of Canterbury, all England was divided into dioceses, most of which continue unto this day.

From this time forward to the time of the Reformation, the Bishop of Rome was conceded a large authority in the direction of English ecclesiastical affairs. At first it seems to have been the authority of a wise adviser, whose advice men sought of their own accord. By and by, he claimed some of those prerogatives of an absolute ruler which he now exercises in the Roman Catholic Church. Sometimes these claims found acknowledgment, quite as often they were denied. The history of the English Church is full of the records of conflicts with the papal power. The overthrow of the papal jurisdiction in England, under Henry VIII., was but the final renunciation of that which had been often disputed before. And the doctrinal reformation effected during the sixteenth century was but the carrying out of the good work begun by John Wycliffe in the fourteenth.

We are sometimes told, with all gravity, that the Church of England was founded by

King Henry VIII., and English Church historians are quoted in proof of the fact. A strange statement, indeed! We confess that Henry's reign began a new epoch in her history, in the final assertion of her independence of Rome, and in the beginning of her doctrinal reform. But it was a strange sort of beginning, which preserved intact the old organization. As well might we call every great epoch in a Church's or a nation's history the beginning of a new Church or nation, as to say that the Church of England began with Henry VIII. God forbid that we should revere him as the founder of the Church of England!

But we do not find it hard to believe that He who sometimes makes the wrath of man to praise Him, and who through the envy of Joseph's brethren wrought out the deliverance of His people Israel, should by His strange providence have overruled the bad passions of the English king to the lasting good of the English Church. Did He not through the bitter hatred of the Scribes and Pharisees suffer His Son to be brought to that death in which was the world's salvation? Nay, we will no more give honour to Henry VIII. for the founding of the Church of England, than we will revere the Scribes and

Pharisees as the authors of the world's great salvation! But both, in the one case and in the other, we will reverently give thanks to God, for that He, in His own wise way, has brought good out of evil.

The history of the Church of England has had other important epochs, but we will not pursue the thread of her history beyond the sixteenth century. That century witnessed her final renunciation of the Pope's authority, and of customs and doctrines which had grown up during the middle-ages. Then she returned to the purer faith and simpler usages of the undivided primitive Church. Then she adopted the confession of faith which she retains to-day. Then she translated her services into the tongue understood by all the people, and gave her people the Prayer Book, almost as we have it now.

II. Having thus spoken at some length of the history of the Church of England, let me speak more briefly as to *her doctrinal position.*

1st. She stands upon common ground with all Protestant churches in asserting the sufficiency and supremacy of God's Word. She proclaims that "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any

man that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." She will put no traditions, no customs, no decrees of General Councils, upon the same level of authority with this Bible which she reveres as the inspired Word of God, and will accept only such formularies of faith as commend themselves by this Divine touchstone.

2d. She stands upon common ground with four-fifths of all professing Christians in holding fast to the threefold ministry of bishops, priests, or presbyters, and deacons. Yet, while she does this, and is most careful to maintain the regular succession of her ministers, showing by that carefulness her conviction that Apostolic order, as well as Apostolic faith, is to be most highly prized, she does not leave on record in any of her formularies one word of harsh judgment on the case of those who, through stress of adverse circumstances, or through conscientious convictions, have departed from that order.

3d. And chiefly, she exalts the Lord Jesus Christ as the Divine Son of God, as the perfect and sufficient Saviour of man, and the One Mediator between God and men. Others may have meant well when they interposed holy saints as mediators between the sinner

and the Saviour, as the Pharisees meant well when they put their traditions as a protecting hedge about the law; but the Lord had cause to charge them with having made the law of God of none effect by their traditions. And so the Church of England, knowing that even right-meaning men may make mistakes, fearing lest the glory of the One Mediator and His one sacrifice may be dimmed, leaves out from her worship all prayers for saintly intercessions, and lifts Him up as the One through whom alone all men must draw near to God; One so forgiving and so tender that no penitent sinner need fear to approach Him directly. Among those branches of the Church of Christ which are giving to their Lord and Saviour an Epiphany among the Gentiles, there is none which flashes forth a brighter or a steadier light than our dear mother Church of England.

III. Let me now, before closing, say something of *the circumstances and the present work* of the Church of England. We are looking about, in this course of sermons, for causes of thankfulness in the position and work of the different branches of Christ's Church.

The first thought about the Church of England which comes in many people's minds is one in which they find cause of regret, the

thought of the union between Church and State. But the nature of that union is very much misunderstood; its evils commonly exaggerated, and its good lost sight of. Many think of the English Church as a creature of the State, which was legislated into existence, and can be legislated out of it. They think of its revenues as for the most part derived from the State. All this is wrong. Parliament must sanction, but it cannot introduce, any alterations in the Church's doctrine, discipline, or worship. The Queen may nominate, but she cannot elect or consecrate, a Bishop. Not one penny does the Church of England, as a whole, derive directly from the State. The State simply secures to her the endowments and privileges which have been bequeathed by the piety of past ages. The supervision which the State exercises over her faith and worship is like that which she exercises over the trust deeds to the property of dissenting bodies, is akin to that which a civil court exercises over the carrying out of the provisions of a will. We must remember that while it would be impolitic and wrong in this new land to legislate a union between Church and State, the case is far different when the State is called upon to secure to the Church temporal privileges and

inheritances which have been accruing for many centuries. And even while we would deprecate any such union in this country, we may find ourselves able to excuse it in England.

Doubtless such a union has its attendant evils. Our times of prosperity are always, I think, more fruitful in temptations than our seasons of adversity. The Church in the martyr ages, when those only dared to profess the faith who were sincere, was purer and stronger than she is likely to be when her worldly prosperity may tempt men to make gain by their profession.

But with the evils are counterbalancing advantages. Our voluntary system has its weak points as well as the English establishment. With us the tendency is to limit our pastoral labours to our especial congregations, and to leave those without to murmur, "no man careth for my soul." With us the wealthy congregation which needs but little pastoral visitation may have the full services of two or more ministers; while the poor congregation like this, which needs much more of pastoral visitation, can afford but half the services of one poor minister. In the Church of England all the land is divided into parishes, and the minister is regarded as

pastor of all the souls within his parish. Many of these may be dissenters, and reject his services, and as a gentleman he will not thrust himself where he is not wanted, but to all who will receive him he is ready to go, and he holds that there rests upon him the responsibility of caring for all within his parish.

We may talk about the evils of a union of Church and State, but it is a good thing that a great State should make acknowledgment of, and provision for, the religious needs of its people; that places of worship should be placed within the reach of all; that from the king in his palace to the peasant in his thatched cottage, each soul should be under some pastoral care; that the kingdoms of this world should have a care for the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ. It is with joy and thanksgiving, as for a blessing, that the inspired prophet gives forth God's promise of the time when His Church should break forth among the Gentiles, when kings should be its nursing fathers and their queens its nursing mothers; a promise which we will venture to think finds part of its fulfillment in the case of the Church of England.

And no Church is better repaying the State for whatever of privilege and protection she

receives from it than is the Church of England. The old persecuting spirit, which once was common to all Churches powerful enough to persecute, has died out. The lethargy and worldliness which were the Church of England's curse in the last century, has passed away, and no Church is now furnishing a brighter example of consecrated zeal than she is. Never have I seen more reverent congregations of worshippers than in her churches. Never have I heard the Gospel more powerfully preached than it is preached in her pulpits. Nowhere can we see more faithful pastoral work than her ministers are doing in crowded cities and in scattered hamlets. Nowhere is the faithful work of lay helpers more profitably utilized. And withal the work of Christ committed to her is making progress, not by fits and starts, but steadily and grandly; as the majestic inflow of a tide, which God grant may never recede.

He who views in its true light the present position and work of the Church of England cannot keep back the heartfelt prayer, "God bless her." And we, of this daughter Church in America, can ask of God no better gift than a double portion of the spirit which His grace has poured upon the Church of England.

No. IV.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES.

Ephesians 6, 24.

Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

THE subject of my discourse to-night is that of the Presbyterian Churches. I say Churches, rather than Church, because there are a number of religious bodies, with quite distinct organizations, who unite in holding to Presbyterian Church polity and Calvinistic doctrine. What I may say at this time will apply generally to all these bodies. They are so far agreed that forty-nine of these distinct organizations were represented in the General Council of the Presbyterian Alliance, held in Philadelphia, in the year 1880, giving to each other the right hand of fellowship, and feeling their way toward a yet closer union. They number a large part of "all who profess and call themselves Christians." It is their claim,

and I will not dispute it, that thirty millions of professing Christians are Presbyterians. And their strength is not to be estimated by count of numbers. Numbering less than one-tenth of all Christians, they wield a more than proportionate influence. They are strongest in most enlightened lands, and among the more intelligent classes of society. It must be left for me later on in my sermon to speak of the noble work these Churches are doing; but I may say here, that they contain noble men and women, who are of the best and worthiest of our redeemed humanity; who are strong in faith and rich in consecrated gifts, in praising whom we do honour to ourselves as well as to them. If you blot out their names from the roll of the great Church Catholic, you will do much to dim the brightness of her record.

How come they to be so divided? Well, most of these divisions are determined by national boundaries. Each nationality, and in most cases each of the greater divisions of any great nation, has its separate Church organization. So the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland, of Ireland, of England, of Canada, and of the United States, are distinct one from the other. The very form of Presbyterian Church polity, which admits of

no higher order in the ministry than that of presbyters, precludes any organic world-wide union of Presbyterians. But also there are divisions of Presbyterians within the same land, sometimes growing out of deep-rooted political differences, such as those which first estranged the Northern and Southern Churches here; sometimes growing out of minor differences in matters of Church government and discipline; and sometimes arising out of more or less serious diversities in doctrine. The number of these bodies would seem to indicate an alarming diversity among them, and to give point to the sneers at our Protestant divisions; and it is a cheering sight to those who love Christian unity to see that forty-nine Presbyterian organizations could join hand in hand in one great Alliance, without laxity or compromise; greeting each other as brethren holding substantially one faith and one polity.

And what shall I say of the history of the Presbyterians? The time is within the memory of some of you when some of their divisions took place. You have seen the separation and reunion of the Old and New Schools in this country; you remember how, in 1843, the Free Church of Scotland came out from the old State Kirk. But when were

the beginnings of Presbyterianism? That is not an easy question to answer to everybody's satisfaction. Some there are who find its roots far back in the patriarchal age, who find presbytery full grown when God said to Moses at Horeb: "Go, call the elders of Israel together;" who trace it down through all the Old Testament history; who find in it the polity of the synagogues; and assert it to have been the polity of the Apostolic Church; claiming that in the third century the dark tyranny of Episcopacy overshadowed it, and the light of Presbyterianism dwindled to a spark, which flickered more brightly now and then, as in the case of the Culdees and Waldenses; and at length by the breath of the Holy Spirit was fanned into a bright and lasting blaze in the glorious Reformation age. A glorious picture truly! And if I could so read the history of Presbyterianism, I would take off this surplice, vacate this pulpit, and become a Presbyterian myself, if they would take me in. And yet I can take a view of Presbyterian history, from my Episcopal standpoint, which gives credit and honour to them. Disbelieving the claim that Presbyterianism was the Apostolic form of Church government; and not seeing what the Old Testament

eldership of the patriarchal and Mosaic times, to which a man was admitted by seniority of birth, and hereditary descent, has to do with a Christian presbyterate which takes no count of seniority or of family; I can yet concede to them a noble origin and an honourable history. Were then the ancient Culdees Presbyterians? So it has been claimed, but Dr. Alexander Mitchell, one of the most eminent Presbyterian historians of the present day, tells us that the latest historical investigations do not warrant that claim.* And as to the heroic Waldenses, who, for a long time before the Reformation endeavoured to hold fast amid persecutions to a purer faith, it is difficult to say what they were in the old times. Presbyterians, indeed, they are, I believe, to-day; but in the old times Baptists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians alike claim them. But we leave debatable speculations, and stand on a firm historical footing of well-attested facts, when we come to the Reformation age. There is no doubt as to the existence of Presbyterianism then. In Germany, in Switzerland, in France, in Scotland, in almost every country except England, we find the Reformed Churches organizing under the Pres-

* Article "Culdees," Schaff-Herzog Encyclopædia.

byterian form of polity. The Presbyterians need not be ashamed to confess themselves the children of the Reformation age; for, with all its turmoils and reactions, and admixtures of dross with its gold, there has been no period in the history of the past 1800 years on which we can look back with greater pride and thankfulness. Nor need they feel ashamed of the history they have carved out for themselves between that time and this. They have done a noble work. They have given noble examples of suffering. The ruthless hand of persecution was laid upon them, and they died by thousands, yea, by hundreds of thousands, as Christ's true martyrs. In France, in Belgium, in Holland, where persecution well nigh exterminated them, they shewed Christian men how to die bravely. In Scotland they built up a nation of strong, God-fearing men, diligent in good works; a people of whom we may say that, take them all in all, there is no sturdier, abler, nobler race of men on earth. They have made their Edinburgh a modern Athens for learning, and their Glasgow a marvel in the world of trade. Their influence, in education, in commerce, in morals, and in religion, has gone abroad throughout the world. From the old Scottish stock worthy

scions have taken root and borne fruit in this land. Here they have built their colleges and seminaries, taking a foremost place in the encouragement of sound learning. None surpass them in educational zeal, and in the care they manifest to make learning the handmaid of religion. They have dotted the globe with missionary stations, and Presbyterianism can report 574 ordained missionaries labouring in foreign fields. Neither of their origin in the Reformation age, nor of their history since, need the Presbyterians be ashamed. And we, reading that history, can afford, in spite of our differences in doctrine and discipline, to thank God for what He has done through them, and to confess that He is with them of a truth.

If I could say of the Roman Catholics, that our Church held much in common with them, still more can I say that of the Presbyterians. Besides the doctrine of the Trinity, and that of the sacrificial death of Christ, we are at one with them in teaching that the Scriptures are the sole Divine Rule of Faith; and we teach the same doctrines of original sin and of justification. The truths on which we agree are the greatest in the realm of Christian theology. And it has seemed a wonder to me that men could

ever think of making more of our lesser differences than of these greater agreements; and that in the matter of these differences we should take so little pains to find charitable reasons for them.

Coming now to the matter of these differences, let us first look at those differences in Church government which give to Presbyterianism its name. What is Presbyterianism as a Church polity?

It is the claim of Presbyterians that the Christian ministry consists of two kinds of elders, and an order of deacons. One class of elders they call teaching elders. To this class is committed the pastorate of congregations, with its work of preaching the Gospel. The other class, called ruling elders, form, with the minister, the council or session of the congregation to which they belong. They have an equal right to rule with the minister, but not to teach. Though what we would call laymen, being not separated from worldly business, they are set apart by solemn ordination to their office, usually for life. They are the representatives of the people in all the courts of the Church. The office of the deacon is like to that of our vestryman, but he is set apart to it by prayer and imposition of hands. These are

the orders of ministry recognized among Presbyterians. For these they claim Scriptural sanction. They deny that there is any order of Bishops who are the overseers of the teaching elders, and their superiors in authority; and claim that this order of Bishops, which gives to our branch of the Church its distinctive name, was an invention of the third century. Such is, I think, in brief, a fair statement of the Presbyterian system of Church polity.

Of course, as a minister of this Church, I hold it to be destitute of sufficient proof, either from Scripture or Church history. But my object here is not a controversial one. After all, there are some things in which we agree, even in the matter of Church polity. One is, that in the Church of Christ there is a Divinely appointed ministry as distinct from the body of lay Christians; a ministry which, while it may be elected by the people, receives its commission and authority from God. Another is, that one of the orders of this ministry is an order of preaching and ruling presbyters. And when we come to the disputed matter of the higher episcopal office, we must not think hardly of our Presbyterian brethren as those who willingly and without cause rebelled against lawful authority.

Presbyterianism came to its birth in serious times, when matters more important even than Church polity were occupying the Reformers' minds and hearts. The Bishops almost everywhere on the Continent were against them, and they were compelled either to renounce their doctrinal reforms, or to refuse submission to their Bishops. In every case they lost the Episcopacy before they denied its lawfulness. Their conflict was first with the men, then with the office. Wherever the Bishops joined in the work of Reformation, there the Episcopacy stood, and there it stands to-day, as in England. We may perhaps find fault with the Continental Reformers for not taking steps afterwards to supply the lack of this highest order in the ministry; but we must do them justice in acknowledging that grave necessities compelled them for awhile to lose it. When the time came in which they might have made good their loss, they had persuaded themselves that they had no need of Bishops. And we must credit them with conscientiousness in their convictions now, even while we hold them in error as to these convictions.

Let us turn now briefly to consider the form of doctrine which is held in common by the great mass of Presbyterian Churches.

It is the form of doctrine commonly known as Calvinism, so named after the great Reformer, John Calvin, its most illustrious exponent. Many have denounced Calvinism as a stern, pitiless, iron creed; and it certainly is a strong iron-ribbed form of faith. Whatever may be its faults, weakness and hesitancy are not among them. Upon a large foundation of doctrines held in common by most Protestants, Calvinism builds up five points of doctrine which stand sharply opposed to the Arminian doctrine held by the Methodists. These are the doctrines of particular predestination, limited atonement, natural inability, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of saints. They are doctrines which have been held in our own Church; and once it was attempted to add a statement of them, in uncompromising terms, to our Thirty-nine Articles. Even those who could accept those doctrines themselves, may rejoice that they were not added to our Articles; but that on matters of which so much lies beyond our ken, we should not be compelled to dogmatize; and that within our borders, if nowhere else, there should be a haven where one is not compelled to declare himself either a Calvinist or an Arminian; where ministers holding both these types of doc-

trine can labour harmoniously side by side. Our Church, as such, has no grave quarrel with Calvinism, save to bear witness by a reverent silence that some of these points of doctrine are too high for our reach or solution.

Standing upon the broad platform of our Church, unable to accept the peculiar doctrines of Calvinism, and yet unbound to oppose them, I protest against some of the bitter and sweeping charges that are often made against Calvinists. I hear it charged that they make God the author of sin, but I cannot join in that charge when I know that from every Presbyterian pulpit He is proclaimed as a Being of infinite holiness and inflexible justice. I hear it charged that their predestinarian doctrine is equivalent to sheer fatalism, a doctrine which clogs the wheels of progress, as fatalism has done in all Mohammedan countries; and yet I cannot join in that charge when I find Presbyterians standing in the forefront of all progressive movements. I hear it charged that Calvinism leads to Antinomianism, leaving men to trust that God's irresistible grace will force them to do that which their reason affirms as right, but their will refuses to attempt; but when I see how fruitful are these

Presbyterians in good works, gladly and willingly done, I cannot join in that charge. Nay, whatever charges against Calvinism may be plausible in theory, the practical evils are few indeed in comparison with these charges.

And when we look beneath the peculiar doctrines of Calvinism to their underlying principles, we find in these the strength of the system. Calvinism exalts Divine grace and Divine sovereignty, humbling the creature only that it may glorify the Creator. So, it is hoped, do we. We may think it goes too far; that it attempts too great precision in defining doctrines which are too high for us. So it may be. But in the name of all that is true and charitable, let us give credit where credit is due. Let us confess that it is a system which has done noble work, has borne abundant fruits, has nurtured in its children a type of heroic Christian character—a type which the world has needed, and will ever need.

And so, while we desire for Presbyterians that sometime they may stand upon our broader platform, and be organized under our Apostolic polity, we may acknowledge them as Christian brethren whom God has manifestly blessed, bidding them God-speed

in their great work, reaching out to them the friendly hand of a brother, and counting ourselves honoured if they shall take it in a brother's grasp.

No. V.

THE BAPTIST CHURCHES.

1 Corinthians 1, 2-3.

To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call on the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE topic before us to-night, that of the Baptist Churches, is one of great local interest. For though the Baptists form a very small portion of the whole number of Christians in the world, they form a very large number of the Christians of this country. According to the statistics published in the Baptist Year Book, there are in the world nearly three million members of Baptist Churches. Of these about 2,400,000, or four-fifths, are in the United States. And of these 1,775,000 are in the Southern States. Outside of the United States, the only country in which Baptists are largely represented is England, which numbers 210,787, or 699

more members than are reported by the Baptist Churches of Virginia. Besides England and the United States, all the rest of the world numbers 201,617 Baptists, or 8471 less than those of Virginia. So that to us in this State, which numbers almost as many Baptists as England, and which, leaving out England, numbers more than the five continents of Europe, Asia, Africa, South America, and Australia, may be found a topic of peculiar interest in the Baptist Churches.

The statistics just given are those of the regular or Calvinistic Baptists. Besides these there are other Christian bodies rejecting infant baptism, such as the Anti-Mission Baptists, Seventh-Day Baptists, Six Principle Baptists, Free-Will Baptists, and Disciples or Campbellites, numbering throughout the world perhaps one million members, of whom at least four-fifths are in the United States. Allowing that for every communicant there are four adherents to any Christian Church, we have, out of about 390,000,000 of Christians in the world, about sixteen millions who reject infant baptism.

There is not the same close doctrinal agreement between the different denominations of Baptists which we find between the Presbyterian Churches. The Disciples repudiate all

human Confessions of Faith, and profess to be guided by the Bible alone. The Free-Will Baptists reject Calvinism. The Seventh-Day Baptists insist upon the observance of the Jewish Sabbath instead of the Lord's Day. But the great body of Baptists throughout the world, all I believe of those who are called Baptists without any other distinguishing name, are in doctrine Calvinists; and while there is no particular confession of faith held as binding upon all the Baptist Churches, most of them agree with the Philadelphia Confession of 1742, which sets forth a moderate Calvinism.

The Baptist Churches are congregational in their form of government. Each congregation forms a distinct Church, and has the sole control of its own affairs. Each member of the Church has equal right to speak and vote in the gatherings of the Church. The members of the Church select their own minister, and may, if they please, ordain him. They may draw up their discipline, and their own Confession of Faith, if they wish to do so. They recognize no *order* of ministry, as distinct from the lay members of the Church; and in this are as distinct from Methodists and Presbyterians, as they are from Episcopalians. The admission of

new members, and cases of discipline, are determined by a vote of the whole congregation. But their congregational independence is somewhat modified by the fact that they are gathered into voluntary associations, which associations require an agreement in faith and in leading matters of discipline. And while in theory they recognize no difference of order between ministers and people, yet practically their ministers do form a distinct order, and in most cases enter the ministry as a profession for life.

Postponing a further consideration of the peculiar features of the Baptist Churches, let me now say a few words about the history of the Baptists.

It is the claim of the Baptists that their Churches are organized upon the New Testament pattern, and that the Churches of the Apostolic age were Baptist Churches; but that in the second or third century the evil practice of infant baptism sprang up, and the rise of the Episcopacy destroyed the independence of the Churches. They claim that Baptist Churches to-day give a faithful reproduction of the organization, faith, and discipline of the Apostolic age. If that claim were true, then no history could boast a more glorious starting-point than theirs.

If that claim could be granted by us, then, doubtless, the best thing for us all to do would be to become Baptists. But while we do not think it true, let it be perfectly understood that we credit them with sincerity in their convictions.

An attempt has been made to trace out a succession of Churches holding Baptist principles from the Apostolic age to the time of the Reformation. There has been no lack of skill displayed in this attempt, and sometimes the historian has made a plausible argument. But it is the judgment of the most intelligent and fair-minded Baptists that the attempt to trace out such a succession is a failure. In the first place, we have but little information respecting the doctrines and government of the sects through which the succession is attempted to be traced. And further, the little information we have is enough to assure us that on many important points they differed widely from the Baptists. It is true that certain principles which the Baptists now emphasize are to be traced in some of these sects. The Donatists, for example, rebaptized converts who came to them from the Catholic Church; but not upon the same grounds as those for which the Baptists would rebaptize us.

They also opposed all connection between Church and State, as the Baptists do; but they remained Episcopalians in Church government, and it does not appear that they rejected infant baptism. There were, indeed, among these sects some who did reject infant baptism; but they seem to have denied so much else of Christian doctrine, that if they were here to-day, our Baptist friends would no more claim fellowship with them than we would.

I think it best, therefore, to accept instead of all this ingenious speculation, the statement of Dr. Osgood, an eminent Baptist divine, who, in his article on the Baptists, in the Schaff-Herzog Encyclopædia, says: "The Baptists appeared first in Switzerland, about A.D. 1523. * * * They are found in the following years, 1525–30, with large Churches fully organized, in Southern Germany, Tyrol, and Middle Germany. * * After 1534, they were numerous in Northern Germany, Holland, Belgium, and the Walloon provinces." Taking this as a correct statement of facts, we see that if the Baptists were later in their birth than some have supposed, they manifested a remarkable zeal, and spread very rapidly. It is to be regretted that with many of them that zeal was

mingled with much fanaticism and error; on account of which a sentence of wholesale condemnation has been pronounced upon all the Anabaptists of the Reformation age. When John of Leyden set up the Anabaptist kingdom in Munster, introduced polygamy, and gave reign to every excess of fanatical cruelty and sensual dissipation, he awakened throughout Europe a most bitter opposition to all Anabaptists. Thenceforward to all other Christians the name of Anabaptist became associated with every pestilent form of heresy. It was not fair to condemn the innocent with the guilty. For, surely, the Anabaptists of the Reformation age were not all fanatics, but some among them were like the Baptists around us, sober, reasonable, upright, and God-fearing men. But it is ever the nature of scum to come to the top, and be most noticed, as hideous deformity is more noticed than exquisite proportion; and so the fanatical excesses of some Anabaptists called down upon the rest a reproach they did not deserve. And perhaps we may see the effect of that reproach in the fact that now the whole continent of Europe does not contain one-third as many Baptists as the State of Virginia.

"During the reigns of Elizabeth and

James I. a large number of Baptists fled from Holland and Germany to England. What influence they exerted in spreading their views is not known. We only learn of their presence by the persecutions they endured." It was especially in the latter part of the reign of Charles I., and in the times of the Commonwealth, that their Churches multiplied rapidly. Their Churches in this period could boast of the illustrious names of John Milton and John Bunyan, names of which the whole world is proud. And from that day to this, though the Baptists of England have not been very mighty in numbers, they have been able to glory in a succession of worthy names, and a comparative freedom from fanatical error; while the world owes a debt of gratitude to the work of that communion which has given us such men as the Missionary Carey, John Foster, Robert Hall, and Charles H. Spurgeon.

But it is this great land that has witnessed the most remarkable growth of the Baptist Churches. After Roger Williams was banished from the Massachusetts Colony, and had made a settlement at Providence, Rhode Island, he became convinced of the necessity of being rebaptized. Having been first baptized by a Mr. Holliman, he, in turn, bap-

tized Holliman and some others. Thus was organized, in 1639, the first Baptist Church in America. Williams became its minister for a few months, and then left the organization, on the ground "that their baptism could not be right because it was not administered by an apostle." But the Church continued, and Roger Williams remained on friendly terms with it until the day of his death. Baptist Churches sprang up in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, and Virginia. Often their members were called upon to suffer persecution for conscience' sake. In 1770 there were 77 Baptist Churches in the American Colonies, numbering about 5000 members. In 1880 they reported 26,060 Churches, with about 2,300,000 members.

It may be well for us to ask the question, "What reasons can be assigned for this marvelous growth?"

And first, we may attribute it to the marvelous activity and the deep religious earnestness of the Baptists, and to the Divine blessing poured upon them as a reward of their faithful work. I should be very sorry to attribute entirely to human causes all this mighty growth, and am thankful to believe that the hand of the Lord has been with them, and is with them still.

Again, we may attribute much of God's blessing in that growth to the fact that they have laboured much among the poor. Our own numbers might be larger, and God's blessing upon us greater, if our efforts were expended more in that direction. The negroes of the Southern States contribute 784,465 members to the Baptist Churches, or more than one-quarter of the Baptists in the world. Here in Virginia, out of 210,000 Baptists, 137,000 are among the colored people.

Again, when we come to speak of human causes for this growth, it seems to me that the free congregational government of the Baptists has had great attractions for a people who had shaken off the fetters of kingly rule, and who were impatient of all authority except that which they themselves had a voice in making. It was natural for them to wish to realize in the Church all, and more than all, the liberty they had gained in the State. And it seems to me that the changed political order did more to commend the Baptist form of Church government to the people of this country than did the belief that such form was found in the Apostolic Church.

And lastly, among the human causes of this growth, I would mention that the Baptist Churches have set forward two or three

salient points of controversy, giving them, as we believe, an undue prominence, but arguing very plausibly upon them. The questions about the mode and subjects of baptism occupy a much larger place in their system than they do in ours. Their people generally pay more attention to these matters than ours do, and often succeed in capturing members of Pædobaptist Churches, who yield assent to the first plausible argument without taking pains to find out what strong argument can be made upon their own side.

Let us now take a brief view of some of the *distinctive features* of the Baptist Churches.

1st. I have mentioned that of their congregational independence, and need not say anything further upon that head.

2d. They reject baptism by sprinkling or pouring, insisting that it is no baptism at all, and that immersion is necessary to any lawful baptism.

3d. They reject infant baptism, and maintain that no one should be admitted to baptism except upon his own profession of faith.

4th. In this country they refuse to admit members of other Churches to the Lord's Supper, insisting that none but immersed members of Baptist Churches are entitled to the privileges of the Lord's Table.

5th. They oppose any union of Church and State, insisting that these organizations are, and ever ought to be, separate and distinct from each other.

6th. They insist upon the fullest religious liberty, and deny the right of the State to punish any man on account of his religious opinions.

7th. They claim that the New Testament alone furnishes a sufficient rule of faith, and gives all necessary guidance in matters of Church government, discipline, and worship.

On most of these points we join issue with them. The Apostolic form of Church government we claim to be Episcopal, and not congregational. While we recognize immersion as a proper mode of baptism, we claim that it is not the only mode. We allow it, perhaps prefer it, but do not require it. We maintain the lawfulness of infant baptism, following the analogy of circumcision, and the practice of more than nineteen-twentieths of all Christians. We have nothing to say upon the union of Church and State. In this country we would oppose it, but we do not deny that it might be lawful under some circumstances. Though our formularies say nothing about the matter, we are ready now to go hand in hand with the Baptists in their

advocacy of religious liberty. With respect to the Rule of Faith, we regard the Old and New Testaments together as God's Word, to be interpreted in their relation to each other. Both Testaments together furnish our Rule of Faith, and the New Testament is to be regarded, not as abolishing the Old, but as enlarging, spiritualizing, and fulfilling it.

Our points of issue with the Baptists are numerous and important. And yet with them, as with other Christians, our points of agreement are more numerous and more important. We have one Lord, and together we worship Him as Divine. As to our sin, and the source and means of our salvation, we hold one faith. Despite our controversies about its mode and subjects, when we consider its aim and meaning, we have one baptism. And there is one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all, and of whom we trust that He is in us all. And having all these grounds of unity, we can well afford to take a kindly view of the things wherein we differ; not, indeed, undervaluing these differences, but seeking some good even in them, and being more ready to speak the word of praise than the word of blame.

We may congratulate the Baptists on the fact that in reviewing their history, they do

not find its pages stained with a record of persecutions inflicted by them. In the good providence of God they are spared that shame. Whether it would have been the case if they had come into great power during the persecuting age, we cannot tell. A man does not always know his own heart. But in Rhode Island they bore a good record. Possession of power did not tempt them to refuse the soul liberty for which they pleaded as a persecuted minority. And now, thank God, we all stand upon the same platform of mutual tolerance. May it not relapse into indifferentism.

And although we cannot agree with them in their idea of the nature of the Church of Christ, or see what they have gained in purity by rejecting infant baptism, or denying the Church to be God's training school rather than a congregation of separatists, yet we confess there is a certain moral grandeur in their idea; and if they can conform their practice to their ideal, they will do well.

And we must give to the Baptist theory the credit of logical consistency. The parts of that system fit closely into each other. If in point of fact their membership of immersed believers is all it professes to be and ought to be, then it may be entrusted with congrega-

tional government without fear of any jar or discord. If members of Pedobaptist Churches have really never been baptized, then they ought not to be admitted to the Lord's Supper. I admire the consistency for which so many blame them, in insisting on close communion. If I find fault with them in this connection, it will be for denying my baptism, not for refusing me the Lord's Supper. Baptism is the Divinely appointed door to all other Church privileges. If they deny that you are baptized, they have no right to admit you to the Lord's Table. And when I know that they refuse you, not because they wish to do so, but because they feel they ought to do so, and in that refusal for consistency's sake suffer reproach, I admire and praise them for it.

May we imitate in all things that consistency which is ever faithful to conscience. And in relation to our fellow Christians of whatever name, may we cultivate that charity which "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things." And when we behold the large work of good which they have done and are doing in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both theirs and ours, it will not require a large drain upon that charity to make us think kindly and speak well of the Baptist Churches.

No. VI.

THE METHODIST CHURCHES.

Ephesians 1, 1–2.

To the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

When I come to speak of the Methodist Churches, I find my topic to be one of a peculiar and tender interest. In their polity and doctrine the Methodists resemble our own Church more than the other Christian bodies of which I have spoken. When we come to trace out our genealogy, we find ourselves near of kin. The Presbyterians and Baptists appear first in foreign lands, speaking foreign tongues. But Methodism is distinctly a product of Anglo-Saxon Christianity. It had England for its birthplace, the English language for its native tongue. The time of its rise marks an important epoch in the history of England; an epoch which, whatever cause of regret it may furnish us, furnishes yet more abundant cause for thank-

fulness. And not only from the nation of England did Methodism spring, but out of the bosom of the Church of England. Its founder was one of her devoted sons, who lived and died in her communion. So that the Methodists and our own Church have the same mother, and in our common origin have a tie of near relationship which should not be forgotten or lightly esteemed. If one of the daughters left the old home, we who retain the old heritage must bear her witness that it was not willingly or without reason that she left. And while we deplore the separation that still continues, the thought of our near kin, and the memory of the blame that lies upon our own side, must check the utterance of any unkind word when we speak of the Methodist Churches.

Indeed, when I think how its good has gone out into all the world, accompanied by signal tokens of God's blessings; when I call to mind how its holy influences have profited my own kindred, remembering that my earliest prayers were lisped as I knelt at the feet of a devout Methodist mother, long since gone to her reward; and that that mother's place was taken, so far as another could take it, by a Methodist saint who still lives, and who never prays more earnestly than when

she prays for me and for my work—how can I do otherwise than think tenderly and speak kindly of Methodism?

There is a charm about the history of Methodism, especially in its earlier stages; a charm all the greater because it is so little concerned with doctrinal differences, and so much with the earnest, self-denying labours of its first promoters. We take sides on questions of doctrinal difference; we unite in the admiration of any exhibition of Christ-like zeal. And the history of Methodism is fuller of deeds than of words. It had its starting point not in any doctrinal dispute. It was born, not of controversy, but of activity. The different phases taken by the movement as it grew, were such as arose out of practical needs. And while Methodism has a distinctive doctrinal position, it represents not so much a school of religious thought as a hive of religious work.

The name "Methodist" antedates the organization. It was first applied in derision to a little company of students at the University of Oxford, who, about 1729, had banded themselves together for purposes of Scriptural study and devotion. They had been called by some "Sacramentarians," and by others were nicknamed the "Pious

Club." But the name "Methodist," taken from their regular methods of study and living, was that which clung to them, and they themselves afterwards adopted it as the chosen name of their organization.

This little band of Methodists included, among others, the brothers John and Charles Wesley, and George Whitefield. All three entered the ministry of the Church of England. In 1735 the two Wesleys went to Georgia, and there for some time exercised their ministry. On the voyage to Georgia they met with a party of Moravians, and were much influenced by their earnestness and simple faith. By 1738 they had both returned to England; and in that year John Wesley and Whitefield began preaching with wonderful power in the London churches. Sudden conversions, accompanied with intense excitement, attested the power of their ministry. And there spread before them an ample field for the exercise of that ministry. The old Puritans had lost their zeal. The Church of England had fallen into a low spiritual condition. In most places her ministers were content with droning out lifeless sermons to empty pews. The gentlefolks were too often godless and dissolute; and the lower orders ignorant and brutalized.

And now these new preachers had spoken the word of God with a fresh power, so that men thronged to hear it. I do not wonder that the effect was startling, when such people were first brought face to face with the realities of God's Word. But such excitement was deprecated by most of the clergy. Many of them refused to open their churches to the new preachers, or to countenance their movement. That refusal spread their work instead of checking it. Debarred from preaching to hundreds in the churches, they preached to thousands in the open fields. Many converts were made; and these, as the movement grew, were gathered into societies. There was no wish, on Wesley's part, to act independently of the Church of England. It was when the churches were closed against him that he built chapels. It was when the parish clergy refused to take faithful oversight of his converts that he banded them into societies by themselves. These societies did not aim at rivalry with the Church, but sought a home within the Church. And if the authorities of the Church of England then had given a hearty recognition to the movement, which their successors now agree in praising as the means of England's regeneration, there need have been no separa-

tion. John Wesley wished no separation; all his life long he protested against it; but the stern logic of events brought it about.

The story of the labours of the Wesleys and Whitefield is too long to tell in one sermon. There are some things in it we may not like. It has its painful episodes, as when we find Wesley and Whitefield engaged in bitter doctrinal strife; a strife which determined their separation. But take it all in all, we shall find it hard to point to a grander story of nobler effort than theirs, since the Apostolic age. Instant in season and out of season, they went to and fro throughout England, in persecutions often, taking their lives in their hands, counting it all joy to bear fatigues and endure sufferings for Christ's sake, and for the love of perishing souls. Doubtless they had their faults and inconsistencies; but the vastness of their good work, in that time of need, makes ample atonement for them.

Whitefield and Wesley separated in 1742; Whitefield forming a Calvinistic, and Wesley an Arminian school of Methodists. Whitefield was the more eloquent and popular preacher. But John Wesley, in addition to great preaching powers, had a wonderful organizing faculty. By far the greater num-

ber flocked around him, were gathered by him into societies, looked up to him as a spiritual father, and accorded to him an authority unparalleled in any Protestant organization. He was at once the legislator, executive, and judge of Methodism. He stamped upon the organization his own doctrinal opinions. He gave it the impress of his energy. His rule was absolute and autocratic, but it was a kindly rule, to which his followers willingly submitted; and under his fostering care the societies grew, until, in the year before his death (1790), the world numbered 119,735 members of Methodist societies, of whom over 71,000 were in Great Britain and Ireland, and 43,265 in the United States, the remaining 5300 being in the West Indies and British America. As long as he lived he kept the societies united, and warned them against separation from the Church of England. But after his death, the seeds of opposition to the Church began to bear fruit. It was no wonder. The Church had opposed the Methodists, refusing to admit their organization within her pale, denying Episcopal ordination to their preachers when that was asked,—no wonder that many of those whose religious experience was altogether gained in Methodist

societies, should come to think, in spite of John Wesley, that the preachers who taught them what they knew of Christ, might also administer the sacraments. And when, finding the Church of England a hard step-mother, they left the old home, the fault lay quite as much with the mother as with the child. And to-day the Church of England repents the folly of 100 years ago, in not availing herself of the powerful agency of Methodism, and incorporating it as a part of her own life.

The growth of Methodism within the past hundred years has been wonderful. In 1881 there was held in London an Œcumenical Methodist Conference, which represented twenty-eight different branches of the Methodist family of Churches, with an aggregate of about five million church-members. Estimating four adherents to each member, we have in the world about twenty millions of people whose preferences are for the Methodist Churches. Of these five million members Great Britain contributes over 815,000. But the United States holds the place of honour in the roll of Methodist progress, numbering 3,818,379 members in 1881, or more than three-fourths of the Methodists in the world. Of this number

more than 3,000,000 are in white Churches, and 803,344 are in colored Churches. Here in Virginia they are largely represented; the Virginia Conference, which does not include a large part of the State, reporting last year 60,180 white members.

Whence this remarkable growth?

First of all, it is due to the fact that John Wesley stamped upon Methodism his own earnest, aggressive spirit, and practical piety. Methodism has never been much engaged in doctrinal speculations or disputes. Almost all its divisions have arisen on questions of polity and discipline. Its theology has been of a practical rather than a speculative sort. Its preachers have addressed themselves more to men's emotions than their intellect. And this has given them a wider audience; for multitudes there are who are more open to approach by the feelings than by the reason. These preachers have gone forth with warm hearts and simple speech, speaking in such language as the people understood the great truths of the Gospel, and testifying that God had blessed these truths to their own souls. They have gone as pioneers to the frontiers of our civilization, and have given their testimony wherever there were souls to listen to it. And they have gone in reliance upon

the Spirit of God, preaching the Word of God—sometimes crudely, no doubt, and with mistakes, but still faithfully; and we read God's blessing on their work of faith and labour of love in this marvelous increase. Let no man begrudge them the success they have so well earned.

And further, that success may be accounted for in part by the fact that the Methodist system brings into play a large lay energy in its local preachers and exhorters; that the itinerant system enables those in authority to put the right men in the right places, and is favourable to the development of preaching power. Methodism has an almost military discipline, and from that comes much of its effectiveness.

It remains for me now to speak briefly of the doctrines and government of the Methodist Churches. In doctrine there is a general agreement among the various bodies of Methodists, and the Methodist Episcopal Church in this country may fairly represent them all. Their Articles of Religion are taken directly from the Church of England (except that which refers to the Rulers of the United States of America), and differ from our Articles only in what they leave out. So well satisfied are they with the

definitions of doctrine in these Articles, that their discipline provides that "the General Conference shall not revoke, alter, or change, our Articles of Religion." We have, then, a common bond of union in these Articles. And if Methodism had no other doctrinal standards than its Twenty-five Articles of Religion, there would be no doctrinal differences between us. But Methodism has its traditional theology, best represented in John Wesley's writings, and in England Wesley's sermons are taken as doctrinal standards. While their Articles leave a platform broad enough for Calvinists and Arminians to stand upon, yet all Methodism has followed its great leader in his opposition to Calvinism.

The Methodist polity and discipline, as represented in the Methodist Episcopal Churches of this country, is a most interesting study. It is more like our polity than that of other Protestant bodies, and yet there are many points of difference. They have Bishops; yet these Bishops are not located in particular Dioceses, but have a general joint superintendence over the whole Church. By these Bishops the elders and deacons are ordained; and yet the Bishops are not considered as a distinct order, which alone has

power to ordain. The Methodist theory on this point squares with the difficulties of the history of Methodism, and acknowledges as valid the ordination of Dr. Coke as its first Bishop, at the hands of John Wesley. To their Bishops is committed most of the autocratic power which Wesley wielded. They fix the appointments of the preachers and presiding elders; they preside in Annual Conferences; decide on questions of law; and from their joint decision on such questions there is no appeal. Beneath the Bishops are presiding elders, visiting quarterly the charges in their districts. Traveling preachers, local preachers, class-leaders, and stewards, complete the list of officers in an organization which, for compactness and effectiveness, has not its peer in Protestantism. Even in those matters about which we differ with them, we cheerfully concede to them a great practical wisdom in the ordering of their discipline; and confess that in some things we might learn profitable lessons from them. And the more we study the Methodist organization the more we admire the practical wisdom of its founder, while we deplore that the societies which he meant to be auxilliary to our mother Church have become her rivals. May God bring us

together again, in that close union which John Wesley hoped for.

As it is, the Methodists and ourselves are next of kin among Christians. Our differences in doctrine and polity are not great. They are great enough to keep us apart, unless some defects are acknowledged, or concessions made; but they are not great enough to forbid all hope of reunion. If John Wesley were back again, how he would labour to bring about that reunion. Its time may be far-off now; but meantime let us not forget the things wherein we are at one. Let us rejoice that through their earnest zeal Christ is made known to many; and that in their midst are saints with whom we may count it a privilege to associate in heaven. Let us thank God for their work, whether they rejoice in ours or not.

In the south aisle of Westminster Abbey, there is a tablet of white marble on which Methodists love to gaze. It bears the names of John and Charles Wesley—names sacred to Methodists—names that should be dear to us. For we too owe the Wesleys a debt of gratitude. The marvelous work they did resulted not only in the formation of Methodist societies, but in the awakening of the English Church. The Wesleyan movement

brought blessing even where its blessing was not acknowledged, and the regeneration of England sprang out of it. The example of John Wesley has incited many a clergyman to a more faithful ministry. The sweet, sacred songs of Charles Wesley have cheered many hearts in all Protestant communions. And it was meet and right that the Church which misunderstood and opposed them in their generation, the Church which still they loved and would not leave, should recognize their worth at last, and enshrine their memory in her most honoured temple, among the greatest of England's sons. May that act be prophetic of a time when, with kindly arms, our mother Church shall embrace their followers; when place and honour shall be found in our communion for the zeal and piety of the Methodist Churches; when we all may be one.

If he were here, none would respond to that wish with a heartier amen than John Wesley.

No. VII.

THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

Ephesians 2, 20.

Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone.

IT is to me a source of joy and comfort, that when I look abroad upon those branches of Christ's Church which differ from our own, I find so much that is worthy of commendation. Not reluctantly, but most gladly, do I embrace the opportunity of commending them. Would that there were everything to commend, and nothing to condemn. Like St. Paul, I desire to rejoice in that Christ is preached, whether by those who agree with me, or by those who differ. Without making light of the differences, I would magnify the agreements, and trust that they are even more and greater than I can see. And the differences themselves I would rather consider, not in the spirit of the heresy-hunter, seeking a cause

of accusation, but in the spirit of a peace-maker, seeking a bond of union. And if the search shall reveal to me a soul of goodness in things evil, I shall hail that revelation with thankfulness. If it shall bring aught to light that shall make us look with kindlier eyes upon each other, we shall all be the better for it. We shall none of us be hurt by a little more of the leaven of Christian charity. We shall be none the worse off for losing such prejudices as are born of ignorance. And glad am I to find, in studying the history and doctrines of other Christian bodies, that our concords are more than our differences, much as we commonly magnify these differences; and that we can here and there see something to commend in the differences themselves; and can give, in most cases, a reasonable and charitable account of their origin.

And I am glad also of this, that in all that I have noted of the excellencies of other Christian bodies, there has been nothing which has tempted me to be dissatisfied with our own Church. The more I see of other Churches, the more I love our own. In some respects these others may furnish us examples worthy of imitation; we may confess some of them our superiors in zeal and

self-denial, may concede to them the praise of greater effectiveness in organization;—but take it all in all, our broad doctrinal position, our Apostolic polity, our reverent liturgical worship, and I think we have very good reason to be satisfied with our heritage in the Protestant Episcopal Church.

And yet, in speaking in praise of our own Church, I am free to confess and to criticise the shortcomings of her children. We are not all what we ought to be, or what our Church system aims to make us. While the Church emphasizes reverence in worship, we are not all reverent. While she aims at spiritual worship, we do not all escape the snares of formalism. We acknowledge many faults on the part of our people. We claim, however, that upon the people, and not upon our Church system, the blame of these faults rests. And we confess that there are pages of our Church history which we would wish otherwise written. We read that history sometimes with severe blame of those who exercised ecclesiastical authority. We deplore the persecutions, the bigotry, the apathy, of some periods in our past, and have no word to offer in defence of these. And in this we stand on common ground with our fellow-Christians of other Churches.

They also have cause to lament with us that dark pages occur among the bright ones of their history; and none of us can well afford to cast stones at the other. With reference to the criticism of our history, we are indeed at a disadvantage in comparison with most other Churches, by reason of the fact that our history extends over a much longer period, and reaches back through darker times.

The Protestant Episcopal Church, of which I am to speak to-night, claims a distinguished ancestry, and makes much of that ancestry. The direct offspring of the Church of England, and her representative in this country, she is proud of her mother's long and noble lineage. Having preserved, unbroken at the Reformation, the long chain of Episcopal succession, and having reason to believe that that chain, still unbroken, reaches back to the Apostolic age, she does not make light of her pedigree. She takes a pardonable pride in the fact that she has a history, and that in this history there are bright and glorious chapters as well as dark ones. She can point to her martyr-roll, and her long record of good deeds. And while this record is not such as she can boast of before God, yet in comparison with others she need not be ashamed of it before men.

The history of our Church in this country may be divided into three periods: 1st. The Colonial period; 2d. The Revolutionary period of decay; 3d. The period of reorganization and revival.

1st. The Colonial period. Long before the Pilgrim Fathers landed at Plymouth Rock, the Gospel of Christ, as our Church has received it, was proclaimed in this country. In the fruitless attempts at colonization during the reign of Elizabeth, were engaged men who had at heart the work of proclaiming Christ's Gospel among the natives. In 1587, Manteo, an Indian chief, was baptized at Roanoke Island, and five days afterward came the baptism of Virginia Dare, the first white child born in the colony. When the first permanent settlement was made at Jamestown in 1607, there came with the colonists as their chaplain the Rev. Robert Hunt, a godly minister of the Church of England. In that year was built the first house of prayer in Virginia, and in that house were celebrated our services. Later in the same year an attempt at colonization was made in Maine, and our Church services were regularly held there for several months. As the work of colonization went on, the Episcopal Church found its way into each colony; and

in Virginia, Maryland, and Georgia became established by law. In New England it met with much opposition, and had few adherents; while in Virginia, at one period, almost all the people were Episcopalians. In 1775, Virginia contained 95 parishes, 164 churches and chapels, and 91 clergymen. But at that time there were many dissenters in Virginia, and many causes of complaint against the Church. The Church was identified closely with the State, and had to bear a large part of the odium which the acts of the English government were calling forth in the years preceding the Revolution. Its revenues were met by taxation of dissenters as well as of Churchmen. Its clergy were not all the sort of men they ought to be. There was need of a wise and godly Bishop; and yet, during the whole of the Colonial period, no Bishop of the English Church set foot upon the shores of America. The Church in the Colonies was under the episcopal care of the Bishop of London, and for a large portion of this period he was represented in Virginia and Maryland by a presbyter as a commissary. This, however, was an insufficient substitute for episcopal supervision. The commissary's powers were too limited; and being a presbyter only, he could not confirm or

ordain. All candidates for the ministry had to be sent to England for ordination; a necessity which, no doubt, kept out of the ministry much hopeful material. While, strange to say, great as was the need of a Bishop, the proposition to have a Bishop consecrated for America met with small favour in Virginia.

With the Revolutionary period came decay and downfall to the Episcopal Church, particularly in those colonies in which she had been established by law. Most of the clergy were loyalists, and, by continuing to use the prayers for the king, brought upon themselves the hatred of their people. Of the 91 clergymen in Virginia when the war commenced, only 26 were to be found at its close. Churches and chapels in almost every parish had gone to ruin. The Church had been disestablished, on petition of the dissenters. With but few clergy left, and fewer still who were worth having, with no Bishop to ordain others in their places, despoiled of her endowments, and hated because of her connection with the mother country, the downfall of the Episcopal Church, especially in Virginia, seemed to be complete. Then her enemies had their opportunity to triumph over her, and they did not fail to make the

most of it. Soon, from being the greatest and proudest of the religious bodies of the State, she became almost the feeblest and the most despised. Her condition was not so deplorable in other States, but it was bad enough everywhere.

Then came the period of reorganization. In this the Church in Connecticut was foremost, electing Dr. Samuel Seabury as its Bishop, and securing his consecration at the hands of the Scottish Bishops, in 1784. In the same year steps were taken towards the formation of a General Convention. In 1785 the Convention met and proposed for use a Book of Common Prayer, which did not meet with much favour in England, and was finally rejected in 1789 for our present Prayer Book, which adheres more closely to that of the Church of England. In 1787 Bishops White and Provost were consecrated for Pennsylvania and New York by the Archbishop of Canterbury and others, and in 1790 Bishop Madison was consecrated in England for Virginia. In 1801 the Articles of Religion were adopted. Slowly, but surely, the Church struggled to her feet again. She had hard work before her, especially in Virginia, but by the grace of God faithful sons were raised up, and these went forth to their

labour in His power and found that labour blessed of Him. Under such faithful Bishops as Moore, Meade, Johns, and Whittle, the Episcopal Church in Virginia has greatly prospered. We have now within this Diocese 151 clergy and 14,153 communicants. Throughout the United States we number 63 Bishops, 3472 clergy, and 360,194 communicants. The annual contributions for all purposes during the past three years have averaged $9,585,277, or more than $26.50 for each communicant in the Church. More than half of this amount has been expended outside of ministerial salaries and expenditures. $419,487 annually has been expended for Home Missions, and $115,659 for Foreign Missions. Among the Church institutions reported to the last General Convention are 17 colleges, 16 theological institutions, 97 academies, 32 Church homes, 48 orphanages, and 44 hospitals. If we cannot boast of as large numbers as some of our neighbours, we may thank God that He has given us, in proportion to our numbers, an effectiveness in good works which will bear comparison with that of any Church in the land. And we are thankful to note that, slowly but surely, the numbers are coming too. We are gaining upon the population, and the rapidly increas-

ing missionary interest bids fair to swell our statistics beyond any previous rate of increase. May God grant that whatever work is done may be done thoroughly, that our growth may not be as the sudden upspringing of Jonah's gourd, but like the slow, steady growth of a giant oak.

Let us turn now to some of the distinctive features of the Protestant Episcopal Church. For it is not so much on account of her past history that we are attached to her, but much more on account of what she is.

First of all, it is important to ask of any Church whether it is truly a Church of Christ —whether in its teaching He is duly exalted. Apply that test to our own Church, and she is not found wanting. There is no ambiguity in her testimony to the Divinity of her Lord, and the greatness of His saving work. She proclaims Him King of kings and Lord of lords. She bears clear witness to the sacrificial nature of His death. She sets forth unmistakably the sinfulness of man, and his utter dependence on God's grace in Christ. She knows of no way of justification save that through faith in Jesus Christ. She acknowledges but one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.

Then she is Protestant in her position re-

garding the Rule of Faith. She is not willing to accept as Articles of Faith any doctrines which may not be proved by Holy Scripture. But in this she does not divorce the Old Testament from the New, as some do; but interprets them in their mutual relations. Nor does she despise the light which early Church history throws upon disputed passages of the Word of God, but thankfully makes use of it, and finds it turn to her account.

Furthermore, she is Episcopal. She proclaims it as "evident unto all men, diligently reading Holy Scripture and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these Order of Ministers in Christ's Church — Bishops, Priests, and Deacons." She smiles at the arguments of those who plead that, as the words Bishop and presbyter were once used to designate the same office, the Episcopate originated in some mysterious way in the second or third century. She remembers that those who deny the Episcopate, first lost it; and is thankful that her circumstances in the Reformation age did not compel her to lose the Episcopate, and then tempt her to deny it. But while she holds firmly to the Episcopate herself, and requires that all who minister within her pale

shall be Episcopally ordained, she has not one word to say as to the validity of the orders of other Churches. Her members are free to form their own convictions as to that matter, but they are not free to define these conviction as doctrines of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

While our Church regards Episcopacy as the Apostolical Church government, from which she is not free to depart; she does not hold that all the details of Church polity are laid down in the New Testament. She suits the details of her polity to the circumstances in which she is placed. In this country she points with pride to the agreement of her institutions with those of the republic. Bishops, clergy, and laity, legislate in her General Conventions, and no measure can become law without the concurrence of all three. We do not go so far as others, and claim as of Divine right those features of polity which harmonize only with republican government; for we could conceive no stronger argument against the Divine right of any form of polity for a Catholic Church whose marching orders bid it go into all the world, than the charge that it was inconsistent with any form of government save that of a republic.

Again, the Protestant Episcopal Church holds to a liturgical worship. Indeed, it is one of the features which distinguish her among Protestant Churches, that she emphasizes the duty of worship in her services. Others make preaching by far the greater part of their religious service; she gives to worship the first place, and to preaching the second. And in order that this worship may be with the understanding as well as with the spirit, she sets forth a form of worship. We thus can have common prayer in our services. We know beforehand what we are to pray for. We are in no danger of being startled by strange or irreverent expressions in the prayers of our public services; the excellence and appropriateness of these prayers being independent of the qualifications of our ministers. And we not only hold the principle of liturgical worship, but use a liturgy, which for beauty and completeness has been praised above all others. It has been hallowed by sacred and tender associations. Many of its prayers have been in use for more than 1300 years. A thousand years before Columbus discovered this continent Christian saints were breathing out their desires to God in prayers which are enshrined among the jewels of our liturgy.

And lastly, the Protestant Episcopal Church has a broad doctrinal platform. Holding to certain essentials, both of doctrine and polity, with an undoubting firmness, she leaves large room for liberty in non-essentials. Upon her platform may stand the Calvinist and the Arminian, the High Churchman and the Low Churchman. Here, if they will, they may dwell in peace. Nowhere in Christendom do we find different schools of thought dwelling together more peacefully, and labouring more harmoniously, than in our own Church. If ever Protestant Christians are to be united they will find nowhere a broader or a better basis of union than in the Protestant Episcopal Church.

We do not stand alone among Christians in the most striking features of our system. We may be few in the United States, but this country does not comprise all the world. It is estimated that there are in the world about three hundred and ninety millions of Christians. Of these over three hundred millions are Episcopalians, who claim for their Bishops an Apostolical succession. Over three hundred and seventy millions practice infant baptism. Over three hundred millions use liturgical services.

And our Church is meeting with the favor of thoughtful Christian men. A very large

proportion of our clergy is composed of those who have come to us from the ministry of other Churches. Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational, and Unitarian ministers, with here and there a Roman Catholic priest, have come in to swell our ranks. Among them were men eminent for learning and piety, whose position in their own communion was well established, whose ties, binding them to that communion, were strong and hard to break. Their learning revealed to them the strength of our position, their piety sought a congenial home within our fold. They came and were welcome; they remain and are satisfied. While such testimonies are given to us of the goodliness of our heritage we will not complain of it. Thanking God for the day-dawn, we will hope for the noontide. Recognizing with gratitude the good that is in other Christian Churches, and praying that their good may increase yet more and more, we need not wish to be in any other than our own. And we look with hope for a good time coming, when our fellow-Christians of other names shall appreciate more highly the Scriptural doctrine, the reverent worship, the conservative polity, and the broad charity of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

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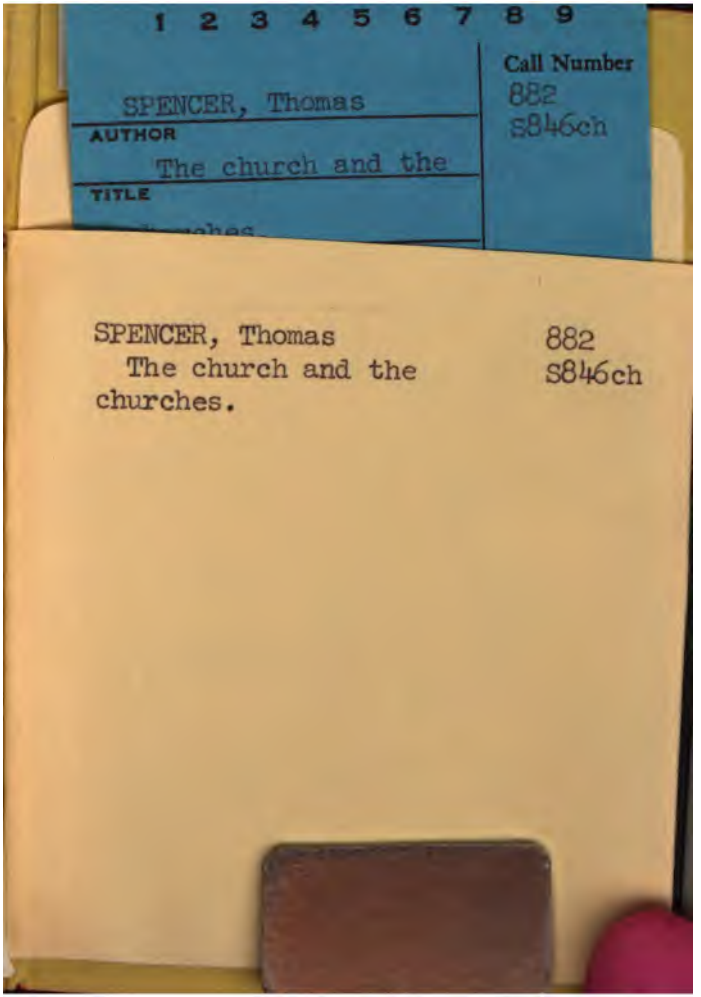

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